

CLAIMS

1. A method for assigning a telephone number to a communications device or line comprising the steps of:

A) assigning a unique equipment identifier to the communications device or line;

5 *not* B) associating the unique equipment identifier with a telecommunications network such that an outgoing call may be originated from the communications device or line that has the unique equipment identifier; and

10 C) omitting association of a telephone number with the unique equipment identifier, thereby inhibiting incoming calls to the communications device or line by lack of a telephone number being associated therewith. *yes*

2. The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of :

D) associating a currently assigned telephone number with the communications device or line for billing.

3. The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of:

D) associating a currently assigned telephone number with the communications device or line for maintenance on the communications device or line.

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4. The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of:

D) associating a currently assigned telephone number with the communications line or device for automatic number identification.

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5. The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of:

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- D) associating a currently assigned telephone number with the communications line or device for purposes other than receiving an incoming telephone call.

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6. The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of:

- D) associating a currently assigned telephone number with the communications line or device for calling number identification.

7. The method of claim 1 further comprising the step of:

- D) temporarily assigning an unassigned telephone number to the communications device or line in response to a request for a temporary telephone number

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8. The method of claim 7 wherein the request for a temporary telephone number is initiated by a telephone call.

9. The method of claim 1 wherein the communications device is a wireless telephone.

10. The method of claim 7 wherein the unassigned telephone number is assigned for a predetermined period of time.

- ~~11.~~ A communications device comprising:

a memory storing a unique equipment identifier, the equipment identifier uniquely identifying a communications device or line, wherein no incoming call is receivable and outgoing calls are operably placed using the communications device or line based on the equipment identifier, and wherein no telephone number is associated the communications device or line for the purpose of receiving incoming calls.

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- ~~12.~~ A telecommunications switch comprising:

5 each line; and

~~13.~~ A method for temporarily assigning a telephone number to a communications device or line, the method comprising the steps of:

14. The method of claim 13 further comprising the step of:

15. The method of claim 13 wherein the request for a temporary telephone number is made by one of a telephone call, Internet connection and email.

16. The method of claim 13 wherein the request for a temporary telephone number includes the predetermined period of time.

17. The method of claim 13 wherein the step of associating the available temporary telephone number with a communications device or line further comprises associating the available temporary telephone number with a unique equipment identifier.

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18. The method of claim 13 wherein the step of making the available temporary telephone number unavailable in the database further comprises providing the temporary available telephone number to an originator of the request for a temporary telephone number.

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